

No legislation is without flaws, and I hope to see a slightly different bill when it comes back from conference committee. Tax relief should be directed toward working middle class families—the backbone of our Nation—and I am concerned that the current bill gives too great a tax break to those with higher incomes at the expense of hard working families. However, this bill is an important step in reducing the tax burden of the people in east Texas.

The budget agreement crafted by Congress in 1993 put us on a path for tax relief. Our deficits have fallen significantly over the past 4 years, and it is now time to reward the people for shouldering their share of the load. Today, we passed legislation to give families \$500 for each child they are raising, to offer tax breaks on tuition for students in higher education, to reduce the capital gains tax, and to increase the exemption for the estate tax.

As I said, this bill is far from perfect. For example, the legislation does not adequately protect worker's rights and fails to immediately raise the estate tax exemption. The exemption, now \$600,000, would increase to \$1 million with this bill, but not until 2007. Many families in east Texas who own farms or small businesses could end up losing significant portions of their family property waiting for this provision to be implemented. The exemption should be \$1 million now, not 10 years from now.

I voted for this bill in spite of its imperfections which must be corrected in conference committee. I voted for this bill because I want tax relief for working families in east Texas. Over the next several weeks, I will be working with my colleagues to improve the bill so that we offer tax relief in a fair and equal manner; today, however, I am proud to say that I voted to save the taxpayers \$85 billion in taxes over the next 5 years.

BLENHEIM CELEBRATES 200 YEARS

HON. GERALD B.H. SOLOMON

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 10, 1997

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, the true character of America was shaped, not in its largest cities, but in countless small towns and villages.

The spirit of pride, patriotism, and voluntarism is alive and well in these smaller communities, where everybody knows and cares about everybody. I'd like to say a few words this morning about one such community, one of my favorites.

The town of Blenheim was the largest of six towns formed in Schoharie County on March 17, 1797. Its most famous landmark is the Blenheim Covered Bridge, the longest single span wooden covered bridge in the world and a national registered landmark. The town's most famous son was Hezekiah Dickerman, who built a large tannery after moving there in the 1840's.

Another famous figure was Capt. Jacob Hager, who, along with his brothers fought in the Revolutionary War and had several encounters with the Iroquois Indians in the Schoharie Valley. Some of the present-day Hagers still live on part of the original Hager property.

The town of Blenheim is also home to Lansing Manor, home of Judge John Lansing's daughter and her husband. Lansing played a role in developing our Bill of Rights. The Lansing Manor is currently home to the New York State Power Authority Visitors' Center.

The town still has a one-room school house which has been reopened as a museum. Every year, third and fourth graders visit the school to learn about the Revolutionary War heroes who came to Blenheim to lease land on the Blenheim patent. The museum is also used for collecting, preserving, interpreting, and promoting interest in the art, history, and culture of the town of Blenheim and surrounding area.

In the period immediately after the Revolutionary War, the area was primarily agricultural. The town of Blenheim has adjusted to the modern era, but not at the expense of its small-town charm, which present-day residents have been careful to preserve.

On Saturday, July 12, the town of Blenheim will celebrate its 200th birthday. The celebration will feature the New York State champion fiddler and many exhibits on the theme of the Revolutionary War.

Mr. Speaker, let us today express our own birthday wishes to this most American of small towns, and wish her and all her residents best wishes in the future. Better yet, Mr. Speaker, come up and visit the town of Blenheim some time for a good glimpse of what made this Nation great.

HONORING NORMAN L. GEISSLER

HON. JON D. FOX

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 10, 1997

Mr. FOX of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a heroic and selfless man, Mr. Norman Geissler. Mr. Geissler is a valuable citizen in the Elkins Park, Montgomery County community, and a keystone of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Mr. Geissler devoted most of his life in service to the people of Montgomery County. Starting at the age of 18, Mr. Geissler progressed through the ranks and became a chief figure in the fire-fighting force of Pennsylvania. His positive leadership and heroism make him a role model in the eyes of both the citizens of Pennsylvania and its most elite firefighters.

Mr. Geissler grew up in Abington Township. In 1946, shortly after his 18th birthday, he joined his father's fire company and he soon advanced to assistant chief. In 1950, he joined Elkins Park Fire Company in Cheltenham Township and became the chief engineer and secretary of the active crew.

Advancing yet again in 1957, Mr. Geissler became the secretary of the Montgomery County Fireman's Association. This role was especially significant because he followed in his father's footsteps, and he remained in this leadership rank for 26 years.

In 1970, Mr. Geissler advanced to the president of the Fireman's Association of the State of Pennsylvania and in 1971 he chaired their convention in Erie.

Elected president of the Keystone State Fire Chiefs in 1987, Mr. Geissler continued to put forth effort and dedication to his duty for the next 2 years. On February 24, 1985, he was

inducted into the Chapel of Four Chaplain and given their award for heroism. Mr. Geissler was also honored with the prestigious James A. Miller Award for Meritorious Service at the Firemen's Association convention, the highest award given by this eminent association.

Mr. Geissler holds several highly ranked leadership positions. He is the parliamentary emeritus of the Firemen's Association, as well as the parliamentarian of the Montgomery County Firemen's Association and their representative to the Firemen's Legislative Federation. In addition, he is the chairman of the by-laws-committee for the Keystone Fire Chiefs.

Mr. Geissler received his 50-year award in March 1990 by the Elkins Park Fire Co. at their annual banquet. Paul Ditzel, a renowned historian of the fire service, gave special recognition to Mr. Geissler in his book, "A New Look at the Old Firehouse."

In addition to well deservedly receiving all of these awards and prestigious positions, Mr. Geissler is a dedicated fireman in practice. The most exemplary incident occurred on April 21, 1963. Mr. Geissler heroically rescued Sharon, Laurie, and Paul Newman from suffocation from a fire in the kitchen. Despite the potential danger to himself, Mr. Geissler entered the dwelling, crawled to the second floor, gathered the children, and carried them downstairs. In recognition of this life-threatening and heroic act, the commission awarded him a well-deserved bronze medal and \$500 award.

The fact that Mr. Geissler progressed all the way through these prestigious positions and the multitude of well-deserving awards illustrates his dedication to his job as well as to his State. Not only do his neighbors think highly of him, but across Pennsylvania he is thought of as a man with integrity, heroism, and extreme loyalty to the Commonwealth.

In addition, Mr. Geissler is devoted to the many fire-fighting organizations of which he has been a part or a leader. His genuine heroism, desire and ability to improve, and dedication to task combines to provide him as a positive leader, ideal role model, and keystone in the fire-fighting force of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

As Mr. Geissler and his family have just celebrated his 75th birthday, I extend to him my personal warm wishes and ask that the Congress of the United States honor him for a lifetime of devotion to his family, his community, and his Nation.

NO TAXATION WITHOUT RESPIRATION

HON. BOB SCHAFFER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 10, 1997

Mr. BOB SCHAFFER of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, taxes on inheritance ought to be abolished, and the sooner the better.

In Congress, we are moving toward our goal of eliminating the tax on property and savings when inherited by descendants.

Even though total elimination of the tax may take several years, we have already approved a measure to protect more Americans from the ravages of inheritance taxes.

The tax, often called the death tax, currently attacks individual estates of more than